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the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room for the Rada deities, a second for the Pétro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

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In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been molesting a family, and of making content those who have been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *hungan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

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The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given,

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based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the *hungan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings—sometimes two, sometimes more—are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal—the food of the gods—are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *verver*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink"—usually non-alcoholic—or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called. 78 79 [532]

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge. 78 79 776 [777] [533]

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

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loa troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sacrifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.⁴

After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.⁵

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This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these differences are important. This is shown by the response of a person in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the question whether the second would resemble the first. The answer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The *Péto* gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the *Rada* deities white, red, and vari-colored ones. Only *Bosu Trois Cornes*, *Pelicon*, and *Pelib* are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than *Bosu*; and *Pelib* because as a water-god he will otherwise take

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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

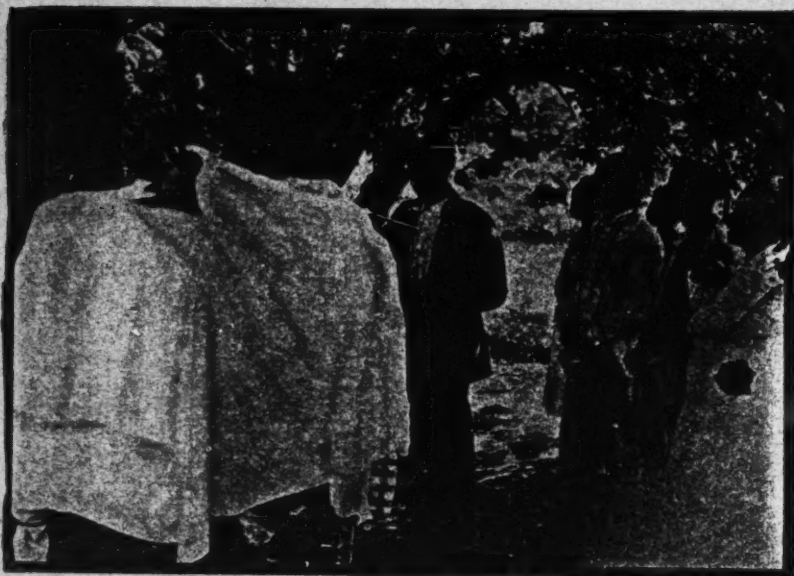
This service was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungan*s to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâces* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

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calabash filled with bananas, millet, rice, beans, egg-plant, and squash. On the table, under the canopy, were a crucifix and holy water, lighted white candles, a lamp of palm oil in a drinking-glass with a floating wick, food — rice cooked in milk, a stew of rice and beans, cooked chicken — and sweetened drinks — *kola*, and orange drinks among the rest, together with small drinking-glasses containing coffee. In addition, roasted and grilled corn, pineapples, fig-bananas, cassava, and sirup could be seen. Fastened to the inside of the canopy were *images*, chromolithographs depicting the saints, there being represented, among others, the Mater Dolorosa (for Erzilie, in honor of those long dead), Our Mother of Perpetual Aid, St. James and St. Anthony. Some thirty feet away, under a palm tree, was another table, for Simbi, without a canopy, on which also stood various cooked and uncooked foods. Still farther away was the "first" table, the most important in the ceremony, for Bosu. It likewise held food and drink; while near it was a large fire, the all-important *boucan* for Legba. The sacrifices, tethered to trees not far from the *trône*, consisted of animals and fowls: one very large black boar, two smaller black pigs, and a black goat, a black turkey, a guinea-hen, two white pigeons, and several chickens, including a black one with ruffled feathers and a number of varicolored ones.

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During the Catholic-like ritual the singing, led by the *prêt savanne*, was desultory. The members of the family, some twenty-five persons, were gathered directly in front of the *trône*. From time to time the leader, holding a lighted candle in his hand, would pour water into a small depression that had been dug directly in front of the altar. All knelt for the prayers, the Pater Noster, the Credo, the Ave Maria, and for the long *adoration* and benediction. Throughout this *action de grâces* and much of the rest of the ceremony, two women *huntsi* in white, members of the family, waved red and white banners before the *trône* or later before the table where rit-



ABOVE, *An action de grâce preceding a vodun service, when prayers of the Church are read by the prêtre savanne.*

BELOW, *As the vodun priest takes over, he twirls a member of the family to bring on possession.*



[facing P. 160]

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ABOVE, *The possessed woman offering a candle and pouring sanctified water before the altar.*

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BELOW, *The vodun priest exhorting the possessed woman.*



[facing p. 161]

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uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *prêt' savanne*, though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâces* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce [et] mise'corde,*" and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa*, telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône*. Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Mait' Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan*, taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *verver*. One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained

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a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, continued to the *trône*, to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

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With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *loa*. Singing, he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

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The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône*. They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for "Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erzilie Gé Rouge was pre-

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sented with the leaves on a branch of the sacred tree. All the animals ate, a favorable omen. 78
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This ceremony was held during the rainy season, but the usual afternoon rains had held off. At this time, however — about eight o'clock — threatening clouds came up and soon the tropical downpour began. The heavy rain continued for more than an hour and the subsequent drizzle did not end until almost midnight, but this was not permitted to interfere with the proceedings. Now the participants took places before the "first" table, for Bosu, again with their offerings. Inasmuch as Bosu was the deity who had shown the greatest ill will toward the family, those present awaited the decision with heightened tenseness as the goat, frightened by the many people gathered about, hesitated long before he nibbled at the leaves held out to him by the *hungan*. But eventually all the animals ate, meeting this paramount test, and as each partook of the food the *hungan* several times called out "*Grâce mise'corde*," the family echoing their response with emotion. Now two men who had strong Bosu gods knelt before the table, and the fowls were again and again touched to their heads and passed over their bodies in gestures that described the sign of the cross, in order to induce their gods to come to them.

As the singing became louder and more rhythmical, various members of the family became possessed. The deities who responded to the calls were, in the order of their appearance, Kita, Erzilie, Simbi, Bosu, Damballa, and finally Gede (Papa Gedenibo). The possessions took their characteristic African form, with some of the possessed running about, jumping into the fire for Legba, and stamping on the embers with their bare feet, others reeling with arms waving, still others rolling on the ground, which, as the rain continued, soon became very muddy. Most of those under possession were women, but about nine-thirty one man became possessed by Simbi, and later another by Gede. As the *los* "came" in ever greater

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number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely disorganized, the "loa" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

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The singing went on without interruption to the accompaniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle. Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:

Bosu li join' qui chose a tè, Bosu found something on
the ground,

Pas remassé li. Do not pick it up.

Bosu ma'ché, Bosu goes about,

Li join qui chose a tè, He found something on
the ground,

Pas remassé li. Do not pick it up.

Un va entrave You will come to harm

Si ou ramassé li. If you pick it up.

Va enragé Bosu. You will anger Bosu.

Simbi en Deux Eaux, Simbi en Deux Eaux

M'we sé p'ou, I do for you,

Fe p'moin, Do for me,

Fi-a, Congo, Help, O Congo,

Congo Zandor. Congo Zandor.

Simbi Kita Kita, travaille Simbi Kita Kita, work for
pour nous, us,

Jodi-a pour nous, Today for us,

Demain pou' zott'. Tomorrow for others.

Erzilie, o Lemba, Erzilie, o Lemba,

M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie
ye.

Mangé a'paré. I ask, where is Erzilie.

Gedenibo, derrière la Gedenibo, behind the
croix, Gede, cross, Gede.

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<i>Devant Baron, Gede,</i>	Before Baron, Gede,
<i>Derrière la croix, Gede,</i>	Behind the cross, Gede,
<i>Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,</i>	Today I am troubled,
<i>Gedevi, rhele Gede, ça</i>	Gedevi, call Gede, this
<i>Gede,</i>	Gede,
<i>Jodi-a m'pas nan sang</i>	
<i>moin.</i>	Today I am troubled.
<i>Balai, rousé, cerclé, quitté.</i>	Cease to sweep, sprinkle,
	hoe.
<i>Moin pas nan sang, Baron</i>	I am troubled, Baron Sa-
<i>Samedi.</i>	medi.

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Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the boar for Boun was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan*, the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône*. The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *kaklo* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa.

All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly attracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of the animals.

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fice of the animals. At one point the *adjanikon* holding the calabash in which the blood was caught threw it on the ground in anger, declaring that animals should not be killed for people who were too indifferent to come and sing the songs that accompany the giving of offerings. Some of those present thereupon detached themselves and came to watch the killing of the two small pigs, as the song, repeated over and over, changed to:

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O minmin, moin couteau
la,
Soso na pè tèt, soso,
Jodi-a.

Oh, here, here is my knife,
A pig is to be killed, a pig,
Today.

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At this point several other men joined in handling the larger animals, for now the one killing the sacrifices could only hold the mouth of each beast before he cut its throat. And when the boar was to be sacrificed, even more assistance was needed, and a line of rope had to be fastened about his snout before he could be handled at all. The killing was ended when the

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sacrificial goat was slaughtered, to the accompaniment of the song:

Ma'ze Louisa,
M'ap' tèt ou jodi-a,
Pour Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,
Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.

Miss Louisa,
I kill you today,
For Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,
Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.

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The calabash containing the blood was now placed on the trône, while the carcasses were gathered in an orderly pile in front of it. The *hungan* described a circle about the massed bodies with cornmeal, also making two white lines in the form of a cross over them. He then began to sing the *adoration* that follows every killing, while the family and all others present threw coins for him into the dish that rested on the bodies, only a few sous of which he gave to his assistants. This rite ended as the women came to him one by one, each to take a

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chicken for cleaning and cooking; the larger animals were given to the men, who carried them some distance behind the *trône* to dress them. For a time Gede continued to possess the young man, who went about talking nasally, demanding gifts and distributing rum, but all others sat quietly about, talking as they worked.

After the food was cooked, preparations were made for the concluding part of the night's ceremony, when the *loa* who had been troubling the family were to be *renvoyé* (sent away) or *borné* (restrained). Those thus "sent away" and buried were Erzilie Gé Rouge, Bosu Trois Cornes, "Ti Kita Demembré, and "Ti Jean Pié Sèche, while Lemba and Simbi djo (Simbi nan d'leau) were "restrained." The head, feet, intestines, heart, liver, kidneys, and some meat of each beast and fowl having been separately prepared, they were placed in proper receptacles, large jars or baskets, each of which also contained a number of needles with broken eyes, and thread. This was to give these undesirable spirits an *occupation*. For the *loa*, when buried, is told that before it may again come to harass the family it must thread the needles, and since it can never insert the thread in an eyeless needle, it can never reappear.

Preparations over, the troublesome *loa* were called to the table for Simbi, and as each entered the head of a devotee, the possessed one fought with the *hungan*, for the *loa*, not wishing to be restrained, offered stubborn resistance. "If the *hungan* had not been masterful, much evil could have happened at this time, because he had to fight three strong *loa*." When they had at last been subdued, the *hungan*, bearing a large wooden cross, walked to a place outside the habitation, where first he made *verver* and then caused a hole to be dug, in which he placed the baskets of food. As he did this he formally announced that this food was for the family's *loa* for whom there was no further need; that having given this food, the family had no further obligation toward them; and they must there-

fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, "which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was "restrained" where the *trône* had been; Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:

*Poussé allé,
Poussé allé,
Icité pas pays ou.
Ça lan Guinée,
Qui pays ou.*

Get you gone,
Get you gone,
This is not your country.
It is Guinée,
That is your country.

A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-third in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of *Péto loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen
nous ye-e,
Enfants yo
Qui ap dit bonjou'.

I say, Gran'.
Good-day, Gran'.
Good-day, good-day.
It is their children, Gran'.
Who ask how you are,
Their children
Who say good-day.

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*Damballa Wedo,
Papa, nan pié boi',
Moin pa' pe' monté.
Papa ou c'e' coulev',
Papa ou c'e' Dagowe.*

*Damballa Siligwe, Anva-
lou,
Nous salué ou.
Ça nous dit,
Alada Sisigwe?*

*Papa Damballa moin,
Signalé nous,
Signalé nous Dahomey.*

*Nous acé! Nous acé!
Papa Ogun qui met' pié
Nan humfort.
Ago, ago-e!*

*Kadia Bosu,
Nous acé,
Kadia Bosu.*

*Damballa Wedo,
Papa, in the tree,
I cannot climb.
Papa, you are a serpent;
Papa, you are Dagowe.*

*Damballa Siligwe, Anva-
lou,
We salute you.
What do you say,
Alada Sisigwe?*

*Papa Damballa mine,
Show us,
Show us Dahomey.*

*We are here! We are here!
Papa Ogun who enters
The humfort-
Ago, ago-e!*

*Kadia Bosu,
We are here,
Kadia Bosu.*

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These songs failed to bring the gods, and the mother of the girl who had been possessed was sternly commanded to take her up the hill to the house and dress her in clean dry clothes. Before she could return, another young woman who, it was later learned, was a member of the family from the region of Grand Bois, some distance away, came running down the hill possessed by Damballa. Crying out for more room, she ordered those sitting near the *trône* to move on as she roughly pulled others toward her. Now the *loa* came rapidly, with six or seven immediate possessions; and even one reluctant girl who stood by nervously, hesitating to soil the fresh white dress trimmed in blue which she, like the other women of the family, was wearing, was soon "mounted" by her *loa*.

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Once again the *hungan* made *verver* and, as he did so, the woman possessed by Damballa, leaping across the brook, climbed into a calabash tree, holding to the near-by palm fronds for support as she shook the tree to punctuate her shouted directions and demands. As she climbed higher and higher, the *hungan* pleaded: "Go no further, Papa. Climb no further," but to no avail. By this time it was after four o'clock, and since this day the rains did not delay, the *hungan* entreated her to descend from the tree, to permit him and the others assembled there to go up the hill out of the downpour. Wooing the "loa" with song, he urged:

Verver ci mè' a tò,

Here is *verver* on the ground,

*Pings cé'monie moin,
Shango, ago-e!*

Take heed of my ceremony,
Shango, ago-e!

While he sang, he made *verver* about the base of the tree on which the woman was standing and along the bank of the stream. But he still had no success, for she persisted with much violence to recount the wrong that had been done by the family to provoke the anger of the gods—how one member had bargained with a *hungan* to induce him to send evil *loa* to the other members of the family, that they might die and his inheritance might be the greater. Before she would consent to descend, all the sacrifices had to be brought for her inspection, and all those possessed were required to go up the hill and dress in clean clothes. Returning in the rain, the freshly dressed women gathered about the base of the tree, exhibiting the sacrificial animals to the *loa*, the chickens held high in the hands of their donors, and the goats and sheep prominently placed. Slowly, very slowly, as the downpour continued, the woman began to descend, and many times she hesitated, so that it was more than ten minutes before she reached the ground.

But even after she was on the ground and the *hungan* was

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preparing to seek shelter from the rain, new possessions continued, until, saying: "The *loa* are greater than I am," he went on with the ceremony, singing:

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*Ossange Damballa Wedo,
Laisé coulé, Ossange-o!
Ai-bobo!*

*Ossange Damballa Wedo,
Permit coiling, Ossangel
Ai-bobo!*

*Moin entré,
M'ap salué loa.*

*I enter,
I salute the loa.*

*Ogun, Ogun Achade,
O, Ogun Achade,
Hier soir Ogun fai' yun
rêve'-o
Rêve' li tourné lègèdè.*

*Ogun, Ogun Ashade,
O, Ogun Ashade,
Last night Ogun dreamed
a dream-o
Dreamed he turned a spy.*

A woman became possessed by Damballa, as did the young man who had "had" Gede the preceding night of the ceremony; the woman was in a gay mood, going about smiling and laughing, while the man threw himself in the water and rolled like a snake. And since the *loa* were coming so strongly, the *hungan* began the ceremony of washing and presenting the sacrificial animals, which this time included two white male goats, one very large and one smaller, a white sheep, and six or seven fowls of various colors. The presentation made, the entire group marched singing up the path to the houses, the flag-bearers saluting with their banners the woman so happy in her possession.

[346] As the procession came up the hill, it passed a newly built small house, intended to serve as the family place of worship for the *loa* now introduced into the habitation, and a framework of brush, or *tonnelle*, that had been erected as a shelter under which the postponed *vodun* dance was to have taken place. Without pausing, they proceeded slowly to the gate-

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way, where a ceremony was held for Legba, the guardian of entrances, that he might permit the other *loa* to pass.

At the direction of the *hungan*, the bars of the gateway were let down as prayers, the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, were said. Then he sang:

*Papa Legba,
Fé ou gagné patience
Pou' ou service.
Ago, ago-e!
Papa Legba,
Sorti lan Guinée,
Pou' nou' passé.*

Papa Legba,
Have patience
At your service.
Ago, ago-e!
Papa Legba,
Come from Guinea,
That we may pass.

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As this song and others of similar tenor were sung, the man who had been first possessed by Gede, and earlier in the afternoon by Damballa, strode shouting along the path beside the entrance, into the near-by fire, which was made the hotter as several men blew on it and poured rum into the flames; he stamped in it until he was seized and calmed. The *hungan* once more began to make *verver*, this time at the gateway, as he sang:

*Papa Legba,
Na pé mandé,
Ça wé la?
Adoré-é-o
A-i bobo!*

Papa Legba,
We ask you,
What do you see there?
We worship, oh,
A-i bobo!

*Papa Legba,
Ouvri barrière pou' nou',
ago-ye!
Ouvri chemin pou' moin.*

Papa Legba,
Open the gateway for us,
ago-ye!
Open the path for me.

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As he sang, he passed the red and black cock for Legba over the body of the possessed man sitting in a chair, who thereupon resumed his excited movements, reeling along the path

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and from time to time again tramping in the fire, as these songs were heard:

*Legba cuisuignon,
À la longtemps,
Moin pas wé 'ou.*

*Legba who limps along,
It is a long time
I have not seen you.*

*Papa Legba, wé!
L'ouvri barrière pou' nous
passé.*

*Papa Legba, look!
Open the gateway that we
may pass.*

*E-ago-ye!
Legba chita lan barrière
Ba nou' passé.
Ago-ye-e!*

*E-ago-ye!
Legba who sits on the gate
Give us the right to pass.
Ago-ye-e!*

The chicken was also passed over other members of the family, but without bringing on any new possessions, and was several times presented on both sides of the entrance-way, wings outstretched, the *hungan* occasionally half-kneeling. Finally stepping inside the entrance, he wrung the neck of the animal, which was destined later to be roasted and to hang for several days over the gateway. While the *loa* Legba was dancing in the fire, Gran' Erzilie "came to the head" of a woman who, after violent possession and a great deal of pacing back and forth in company with "Legba," went down on her knees. Still another woman became possessed, by Damballa, and rolled in the mud. Another procession, for the return to the *tonnelle*, was formed as a lilting song was sung, with everyone dancing to it. "Legba," walking backwards, led the way, calling out: "This way, Papa, come this way." The one possessed by Gran' Erzilie followed on her knees, while, some distance behind, "Damballa" rolled from side to side as she moved her body face-downward along the path. After a few moments the woman on her knees began to beat the ground rhythmically as she proceeded, and as "Damballa" caught up with her, she beat this rhythm on the thighs and buttocks

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of the other. Arrived at the *tonnelle*, both were finally induced to come to their feet, to be immediately sent away and freshly dressed. 78
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Inside the family shrine, on the ground at the right hand as one entered, were the articles of food and drink that usually constitute a "dry" offering, or *mangé sec* — rolls, cassava, cakes, grilled maize, coffee grounds, sirup, and bowls of cornmeal called *accanuan*, with water. The *hungan* made more reverent just inside this door to honor the gods that were to be worshipped here, as the "ceremony of the sheep," a sacrifice for the *Rada los* named St. John the Baptist, was begun. A table was placed under the *tonnelle*, and a container of water in which the animal was first washed. He was then made to stand on the table, where a fresh white table-cloth had been spread, while he was combed, powdered, and perfumed. A piece of white cotton cloth was tied about the horns of the animal, and a lighted white candle was held in place on the right horn or at times between the horns by an attendant. While a song honoring Damballa Wedo was sung, the *hungan* went into the small house to care for the two women, who were still in a state of possession. He set them dancing inside and after a few minutes they were led forth by "Legba," each to pour water and to light a candle before the sheep. The two goats were next washed and "dressed," white cloths and soft beeswax candles also being twisted about their horns. Other offerings under the *tonnelle* were a white pigeon for Damballa and a red cock for Ogun. (346)

Each member of the family now took the fowl or animal that was his offering, as all were summoned inside the shrine, where final directions were given regarding the disposal of the sacrifices, and invocations were spoken to the gods. After this they came out, placing the animals before the men who were waiting to see to the killing, which was carried out in a manner even more matter-of-fact than on the first night of the ceremony. By this time it was about half past six o'clock, and

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night had fallen. As before, the men addressed themselves to the task of butchering the animals, the women to that of preparing and cooking the fowls.

It was perhaps five o'clock in the morning before all the food was made ready to serve. The *hungan*, who had been taking a well-deserved rest, was called, and prepared a plate for each *loa*. After giving every member of the family a dish, he arranged them in two rows before the small house of worship, himself heading the group, attended by two *hunsi* with white and red candles and sacred water. First reciting the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo, he announced to the Rada *loa* that their food was ready and that they were invited to come and partake of it. As he said this, each person entered the house as directed, to place the plate he carried on the table, where a cloth, knives, forks, spoons, and condiments already had been arranged. Many members of the family became possessed, an excellent omen that the Rada *loa* were eagerly coming to partake of the offerings. The head of the goat was placed on the floor, the roasted cock was hung above the gate leading to the habitation. Then the door of the house of worship was closed that the *loa* might eat undisturbed, and for several hours people sat quietly by. Finally the *hungan* knocked at the door to announce his entrance and asked if the *loa* had finished. He then called the family to come and eat what the gods had left, and by ten o'clock that morning, everything was consumed.